II.—ANNOUNCEMENTS.

(1) PANEL OF VICE-CHAIRMEN.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have to announce to the House that under Rule 14 of the Madras Legislative Council Rules, I have nominated the following Members of the Council to be the Panel of Vice-Chairman for the twenty-sixth session of the Legislative Council under the Constitution :—

1. Sri S. K. Sambandhan.
2. Sri Mohanlal Mehta.
3. Sri G. Krishnamoorthy.

III.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

Tractors

*1 *Q*.—SRI S. K. SAMBANDHAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries be pleased to state whether the tractors, under the control of Panchayats, are exempted from the payment of tax under the Madras Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1931?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : No.

SRI S. K. SAMBANDHAN : Will the Hon. Minister tell us whether the Government are aware that a number of panchayats that own tractors own them for the purpose for which they are to be put to use by panchayats?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Yes, Sir. The Government have examined the position. Any concession given in respect of the payment of motor vehicles tax is only a concealed subsidy to the panchayat. Therefore, it is not necessary to give any such concession.

SRI S. K. SAMBANDHAN : Since there are only very few tractors used by a very few panchayats, will this concession not be considered? They are used mostly for agricultural purposes, that is, for the production of compost manure. Tractors used for agricultural operations are exempt from this tax.

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : The Government have examined this position and have come to the conclusion that it is not necessary to give exemption from the motor vehicles tax.

SRI S. K. SAMBANDHAN : Sir, are not the tractors used wholly or purely for agricultural purposes exempt from tax?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : In respect of private persons, the tractors used exclusively for agricultural operations are exempt from tax. But even in those cases, if they transport their goods from one place to another, they are not exempt from tax. Therefore, we do not think it necessary to give exemption.

SRI S. K. SAMBANDHAN : Sir, it may be a matter of principle, but it involves huge sums for the panchayats. Even though it is a few hundreds, it is a huge sum for the panchayats. Therefore, will the Government reconsider the question of exempting them from tax?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : It is a matter of principle, and the Government do not propose to reconsider the question.

DR. H. V. HANDE : Sir, what is the number of tractors exempted from this tax?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : All tractors used for agricultural operations are exempt from tax.

DR. H. V. HANDE : Sir, I asked for the number of tractors. Have the Government defined what is meant by purely agricultural operation?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : There are rules issued in this behalf, from time to time, and we take them into consideration.

SRI K. ANBAZHAGAN : Is there any restriction on those tractors which use the highways and other roads, and have they to get permission from the road transport authority?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : I cannot answer this question off-hand. If a separate question is put, I will have it examined.

SRI S. K. SAMBANDHAN : Sir, I understand that there are no definitions about agricultural operations. The Regional Transport Officers in the various districts are defining it according to their own whims and fancies, and it results in considerable hardship to the people. Therefore, it is necessary to define what is meant by agricultural operation.

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : The information that the Government have received is somewhat different. The information is that under the guise of agricultural operation, people are marketing goods, transporting goods and so on. In those cases, the Regional Transport Officers catch them and take action against them. As far as the rules are concerned, if a separate question is put, I will have it examined and place it on the table of the House.

DR. H. V. HANDE : Sir, what is the procedure by which these vehicles come under the purview of the Police department, how do they mark numbers, and how do they keep track of them? Suppose an accident takes place, the Police department will not take any notice. Is there any procedure for the police to exercise control over these vehicles?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : I do not understand this question. A separate question may be put.

SRI S. K. SAMBANDHAN : Sir, will not the movement of foodgrains in agricultural produce come under agricultural operations?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Because, that is a commercial transaction in which we are getting profit.

DR. H. V. HANDE : Do these tractors have registration numbers?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : Yes, they have. The Police Department has got a register. Once in three months every motor vehicle has got to go and pay the tax.

Presentation to His Holiness the Pope

* 2 *Q.*—SRI S. K. SAMBANDHAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether any memento was presented to the Pope Paul on behalf of this Government during his recent visit to India; and

(*b*) if so, what it is and the details thereof?

கனம் திரு. ஆர். வெங்கட்டராமன் : (அ) & (இ) ஆம். தூய போப் ஆண்டவருக்கு கீழ்க்கண்ட பொருள்கள் அன்பளிப்பாக வழங்கப்பட்டன :—

1. தூண்டா மணிவிளக்கு.
2. தேவாலயப் பொருட்கள்—

    குடை
    கொடி
    சாமரம்
    கண்ணடி
    சந்திரபாதம்
    சூரியபாதம்
    விசிறி

3. பஞ்சமுக தூண்டா விளக்கு 16.

SRI S. K. SAMBANDHAN : Will the Hon. Minister tell us who presented this to the Pope?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : One of the officers who was in charge of our show room there presented it.

SRI S. K. SAMBANDHAN : Sir, is it one of the officers or wife of one of the officers?

THE HON. SRI R. VENKATARAMAN : I am sorry, Sir, it is Mrs. Varghese who was actually present, that gave this.